

On the Snooping Trail-

By Morton Mintz
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The martini with a transmitter in its olive is an elegant piece of gear, but complicated and expensive. The sober snooper, the man seeking economy, simplicity and all-around utility, might prefer a slick new beeping Tom that was shown recently to a Senate investigator.

The device was discovered nestled in the mouthpiece of a pay phone outside a 791 market in Miami. Who made it, who put it there, why it was there — the answers to questions like these were not determined.

But so long as the gadget was there, the words of every person who spoke on that phone (and, with a swift, minor adjustment, of persons who spoke in the vicinity of the phone) would be broadcast for about a city block and could be heard on a receiver and tape-recorded.

In a matter of moments the device can be slipped into the mouthpiece. Although it replaces an identically bowl-shaped standard part, it has a tiny, two-transistor transmitter in a normally vacant space.

What the investigator, Bernard Fensterwald Jr., found most disturbing was that the transmitter was powered not by a battery, which has the decency to wear out after a time, but by the phone circuit itself.

The device can be produced cheaply in quantity—for perhaps \$5 each, according to Fensterwald, who is chief counsel for the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure.

It is but one of many increasingly sophisticated pieces of snooping gear that concern the Subcommittee, headed by Sen. Edward V. Long (D-Mo.), in its continuing investigation of invasions of privacy.

Until now, the Subcommittee has concentrated on snooping by Government agencies—the Post Office Department, the Food and Drug Administration and the Internal Revenue Service.

-Industry

Is Next Probe Target

The investigation of Government eavesdropping will continue indefinitely, one concern being the extent of compliance with the recent clampdown ordered by President Johnson. More revelations about IRS and FDA procedures are expected.

"I don't want to say any agency in the Government will not be looked at," Long said in an interview.

Meanwhile, H. G. Homme, assistant counsel to the Subcommittee, is preparing for hearings, possibly around the end of the year, on industrial snooping.

Plans already have been made to summon several private detectives, including former FBI agents. For retainers in the range of \$30,000 a year, they have done offensive and defensive electronic snooping on competitors for clients, including pipeline companies, airlines, airplane makers and distillers.

Sen. Long pointed out that the justifications often offered for Federal eavesdropping—national security, law enforcement, getting at organized crime—would seem not to apply to industrial snooping.

He said the upcoming hearings should illuminate such questions as how much is being spent for industrial espionage, what it does to business ethics and morale and whether it would be susceptible to a blanket prohibition by law.

There seems to be no question that the increasing sophistication and economy of eavesdropping gear has made it an organized industrial spying commonplace.

Perhaps symbolizing the suspicious atmosphere of today is an advertisement for a "security crematory" in last April's issue of "Industrial Security."

"Cremate for top secret security," the headline on the full-page magazine advertisement reads. "Reduction to an unphotographable white ash that makes even partial reconstruction of classified documents impossible is the ultimate in disposal."